

I'm writing today to petition the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to carefully consider the environmental impact related to docket CP15-554, the Atlantic Coast Pipeline. My husband and I own a farm in Millboro, Virginia, approximately 5 miles from the nearest intersection with the Atlantic Coast Pipeline's proposed southern alternate route for GWNF-#6. Five miles may seem a significant distance and is, in fact, enviable to my neighbors who sit directly in the pipeline's path. We, however, take little comfort in it.

Our 115-acre farm and the terrain for miles around is replete with karst. As many experts and concerned landowners have noted, karst is a mysterious, unknowable amalgamation of caves, streams and aquifers that supply the springs and wells my family and many others depend on for our drinking water. According to the Department of Conservation and Recreation, the hollow nature of karst terrain means groundwater can travel up to several miles *a day* through unpredictable underground networks, rapidly spreading contaminants to springs and wells along the way. Additionally, land disturbances much less significant than those proposed by the construction of the ACP cause soil erosion and destructive sedimentation that can clog these underground networks, completely blocking the groundwater supply needed to recharge "faraway" springs like ours, and drying up the only access we have to clean, potable water. As there is no municipal water source of any kind available to those of us living in proximity to the GWNF-#6 corridor, any disruption to the natural flow of groundwater is potentially devastating.

Of further concern, the overflow from the same underground spring that supplies our drinking water fills two ponds that discharge into Thompson Creek, a tributary of the

currently pristine Cowpasture River. The ponds and creek are aquatic habitats for trout and other fish; waterfowl including wood ducks, Canadian geese, diving ducks, and great blue herons; birds of prey such as red-tailed hawks and the occasional bald eagle; and other wildlife-all of which are dependent upon a reliable yield from the underground aquifer feeding our spring.

It's impossible to overstate the value of a clean water source to the land and those of us charged with its stewardship. We have owned our farm since 1990 and in that time, we've seen our once robust spring significantly diminished by the effects of a decade-long drought. And while droughts are in large part a natural phenomenon, human activities such as the construction and maintenance of a monstrous, 42-inch pipeline (unprecedented in karst terrain and which recent studies suggest is unnecessary to meet energy demands) seems blatantly irresponsible.

For these reasons and the reasons to follow, I am opposed to the building of the Atlantic Coast Pipeline.

Other concerns:

- I'm filing this motion today, but not because I feel adequately informed and prepared to address my growing concerns surrounding the construction of the ACP. By contrast, I feel overwhelmed and out of time. Because of the abbreviated 30-day scoping period, I can only imagine many of my neighbors feel the same.
- The National Forest Service and other conservation organizations regard the region including the George Washington National Forest a "critical, wildland core of the Central Appalachians," making it a high priority conservation area. Not only will the ACP destroy wildlife habitats, it will permanently and irreparably

scar the landscape and surrounding viewsheds. For an isolated county like Bath that depends overwhelmingly on tourism as its primary source of revenue, such far-reaching destruction seems unacceptable.

- The recently released study, Risks Associated with Natural Gas Pipeline Expansion Across the Appalachians, directly disputes the assumption that pipelines are only approved if necessary. In fact, the study shows that developers are incentivized to overbuild even if the new infrastructure is not actually needed to meet demand. It's imperative that landowners be protected from the resulting loss of land value and livelihood if energy demands can be met through existing infrastructure.

In summary, without rigorous investigative study, including extensive dye tracing as well as sinkhole and cave mapping, it's impossible to anticipate or mitigate the environmental impact to this most fragile region. Once done, the destruction cannot be undone. I respectfully urge FERC to slow down, to conduct a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement, and to do its due diligence to protect landowners, local communities and the environment.

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